

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 048602

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAIR, YO, US

SUBJECT: HIJACKING TRIAL

REF: STATE 26139

1. ONE OF THE FIVE DEFENDANTS, MARK VLASIC, HAS PLEADED GUILTY TO A LESSER STATE CHARGE OF KIDNAPPING, ACCORDING TO AN AP REPORT OF MARCH 2, ON CONDITION HE PLEAD GUILTY TO THE FEDERAL CHARGE OF AIR PIRACY AND THAT HE NOT BE MADE TO TESTIFY AGAINST THE OTHERS. VLASIC'S AIM IS TO AVOID POSSIBLE DEATH PENALTY, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT WHICH INDICATED TWO OTHER DEFENDANTS MAY BE SEEKING SIMILAR DEALS.

2. VLASIC HAD ALSO BEEN CHARGED BY THE STATE WITH MURDER AND ASSAULT, THE FORMER BEING THE CAPITAL OFFENSE. ASSISTANT US ATTORNEY PATTISON CONFIRMED THE REPORT, SAYING A SIMILAR GUILTY PLEA IN THE FEDERAL CASE WOULD FINISH THE PROCEEDINGS AS FAR AS VLASIC IS CONCERNED. THE STATE'S KIDNAPPING CHARGE CARRIES A SENTENCE OF A MINIMUM SIX YEARS
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TO MAXIMUM SIXTEEN. THE FEDERAL AIR PIRACY CHARGE CARRIES A MINIMUM TWENTY TO MAXIMUM THIRTY. THE STATE'S SENTENCING WAS SET FOR APRIL 29.

3. ALTHOUGH AP SAID THE STATE TRIAL OF THE OTHERS WOULD

BEGIN MARCH 7, PATTISON INSISTS THAT THE FEDERAL TRIAL

WILL GO FIRST AND THE MARCH 14 DATE FOR OPENING PRETRIAL
HEARINGS STILL STANDS.

4. SY HAS COORDINATED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WITH NEW YORK
CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT. IT HAS INSTITUTED PHYSICAL SUR-
VEILLANCE OF YUGOSLAV INSTALLATIONS IN NEW YORK AND HAS
MOUNTED AN INTENSIVE COVERT PENETRATION OPERATION AGAINST
LOCAL EMIGRE GROUPS TO ESTABLISH AN EARLY WARNING CAPA-
BILITY. SY HAS ALERTED LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN OTHER CITIES
WITH YUGOSLAV CONSULATES. WE HAVE INFORMED YUGOSLAV EMBAS-
SY IN GENERAL TERMS OF THE ABOVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS,
AND IT APPEARS SATISFIED.
VANCE

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Message Attributes

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